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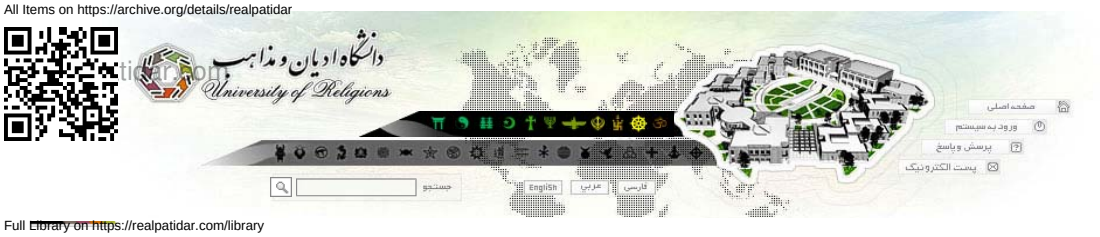

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SHIISM

Encyclopedia of Religion, SHIISM, Vol.13, p.242

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An Overview

Isma`iliyah

Ithna `Ashariyah

The introductory article traces the general historical development of Shiism; the companion articles focus on two major subdivisions[.

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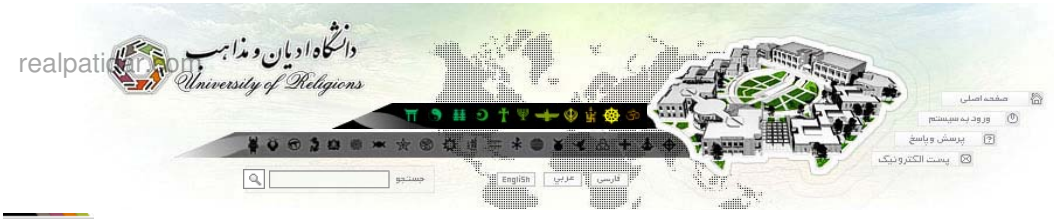

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wronged descendants. Soon, however, they distanced themselves from their mostly extremist Shi`i followers to seek broader support in the Muslim community, while the Shi`ah increasingly confined their backing to the descendants of `Ali and Fatimah. After the collapse of a widely supported Shi`i rebellion in favor of the `Alid Muhammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyah, Caliph al-Mahdi (775-785) pressed the Abbasid Shi`ah to trace the line of divinely invested imams back to `Abbas through his own ancestors, thus denying that the Abbasids had inherited their title from Abu Hashim and `Ali. The Abbasid Shi`ah disintegrated soon afterward.

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Extremists and moderates. Other minor offshoots of the Hashimiyah were notable for their extremist doctrine. Bayan ibn Sam`an (killed 936) taught in Kufa that Abu Hashim, who had conferred prophethood on him, would return as the Mahdi. `Abd Allah ibn Mu`awiyah (d. 748/9), a descendant of `Ali's brother Ja`far and recognized by some as the successor of Abu Hashim, claimed that the Divine Spirit had devolved upon him through the prophets and imams and that he was able to revive the dead. To `Abd Allah ibn al-Harith, one of his followers in al-Mada'in (Ctesiphon), Iraq, is ascribed a major role in the elaboration of key doctrines including metempsychosis, the preexistence of human souls as shadows (azillah), metaphorical interpretation of the resurrection, judgment, paradise, and hell, and a cyclical history of eras (adwar) and aeons (akwar) initiated by seven Adams. Such teaching became characteristic of many groups of extremists (ghulat) excommunicated by the mainstream Shi`ah in the following centuries. The Kaysaniyah as a whole was repudiated by the more conservative, moderate Shi`ah in Kufa. All of its branches rapidly disintegrated after the rise of the Abbasid caliphate and virtually disappeared by the end of the second century AH. Its place in the radical wing of the Shi`ah was taken by the Imamiyah, who traced the line of imams after `Ali through Hasan, Husayn and the latter's descendants.

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The increasing prominence of the Husaynid imams within the Shi`ah was connected with a shift in the function of the imam. With the rise of legal and theological schools espousing conflicting doctrines in the late Umayyad period, many of the Shi`ah sought the guidance of the imam as an authoritative, divinely inspired teacher rather than as a charismatic leader. The first to perform this new role was Muhammad al-Baqir (d. 735?), a grandson of Husayn who was widely respected for his learning among both the Shi`ah and non-Shi`ah. His teaching of religious law and Qur'an exegesis attracted a large number of the Kufan Shi`ah. Keeping aloof from revolutionary activity, he laid the foundations of Imami Shi`i law. A few years after his death his brother Zayd ibn `Ali came to Kufa and was persuaded to lead an anti-Umayyad revolt. Although he was widely supported by the Kufan Shi`ah, including some prominent former followers of his brother, the more radical followers of al-Baqir refused to back Zayd ibn `Ali after he declined to condemn the first two caliphs unequivocally as unjust usurpers. They turned instead to al-Baqir's son Ja`far al-Sadiq, who, like his father, strictly refused any involvement in armed rebellion. Zayd's revolt ended quickly in failure, and he was killed in 740. The movement backing him survived, however, and formed a Shi`i sect known as the Zaydiyah. They were moderate both in defining the religious rank of their imams and in condemning the rest of the Muslim community for its failure to do so, yet they were militant advocates of armed uprising against the illegitimate rulers. In contrast to the Zaydiyah, the Imamiyah exalted the rank of the imams and broke radically with the Muslim community at large, accusing it of apostasy for failing to accord the imams their proper rank and rights. Politically, however, they remained quietist. They were called Rafidah, "rejectors," by the followers of Zayd because of their refusal to support his revolt. The term became a pejorative nickname among Sunni Muslims, who used it, however, to refer to the Imamiyah's repudiation of the three caliphs preceding `Ali. Those Shi`i moderates of Kufa who shrank back from the Zaydi commitment to revolt were soon absorbed into Sunnism as `Ali came to be accepted generally as the fourth of the "Rightly Guided" (Rashidun) successors of Muhammad.

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The Imamiyah and Twelver Shi`ah. The Imamiyah became a significant religious community with a distinctive law, ritual, and religious doctrine under Ja`far al-Sadiq (d. 765), the foremost scholar and teacher among their imams. Ja`far elaborated the legal pronouncements of his father into a comprehensive doctrine; in recognition of his role, Imami law is sometimes called the Ja`fari legal school. In theology, some of his statements upheld intermediate positions on controversial questions such as human free will versus predestination, and the nature of the Qur'an. These were developed into systematic theological thought by certain contemporary Imami scholars who took a prominent part in the intercommunal theological debates of his time. Ja`far enjoyed a high reputation as a teacher of esoteric and mystical thought, though his actual role in this field is obscure.

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The imamate. The constitutive element of the Imami community is its doctrine of the imamate, which was definitely formulated in this age. It was based on the belief that humanity is at all times in need of a divinely appointed and guided leader and authoritative teacher in all religious matters. Without such a leader, according to Imam Ja`far, the world could never exist for a moment. In order to fulfill his divine mission, this leader must be endowed with full immunity (`ismah) from sin and error. Following the age of the prophets, which came to a close with Muhammad, the imams continue their prophetic mission in every respect except that they do not bring a new scripture. The imamate is thus raised to the rank of prophethood. Rejection, disobedience, or ignorance of any of the divinely invested imams constitutes infidelity equal to rejection of the Prophet. The great mass of the companions of Muhammad had thus apostatized from Islam when they accepted the caliphate of Abu Bakr and ignored the Prophet's divinely inspired designation of Ali as his legatee (wasi), and the majority of the Muslim community continued to live in a state of apostasy. After `Ali, Hasan, and` Husayn, the line of legitimate imams had passed through Husayn's descendants to Ja`far al-Sadiq, the sixth imam. It would continue to be handed down by designation from father to son until the end of time. Although the imam was the only legitimate ruler of the Muslim community, his imamate did not depend on his actual reign or an active attempt to gain it. Imam Ja`far did not aspire to rule and forbade his followers from engaging in revolutionary activity on his behalf. He predicted that the imams would not regain their rightful position until the emergence of the Qa'im (lit. "riser," i. e., the Mahdi) from among them to rule the world.

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The succession to Ja`far al-Sadiq was disputed and led to a schism among the Imamiyah. His eldest son and designated successor, Isma`il, had died before him. A group of his followers considered the designation as irreversible, however, and either denied Isma`il's death or recognized Isma`il's son Muhammad as the imam. They became the founders of the Isma`iliyah. In the absence of a new designation, the majority of Ja`far's followers at first recognized his eldest surviving son, `Abd Allah al-Aftah. When Abd Allah died a few months later without sons, they turned to his brother Musa al-Kazim, the seventh imam of the Twelver Shi`ah. Some of them, however, continued to recognize `Abd Allah as the rightful imam before Musa. They were known as the Fathiyah and constituted a sizable sect in Kufa until the late fourth century AH (tenth century CE). Musa was arrested later in his life by Caliph

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Harun al-Rashid and died in prison in Baghdad in 799. His death was denied by many of his followers, who considered his position as seventh imam to be of momentous significance and expected his return as the Mahdi. They did not recognize `Ali al-Rida, the eighth imam of the Twelver Shi`ah, although some of them considered him and his successors as lieutenants (khulafa') of the Mahdi until his return. They also formed a sizable sect known as the Waqifah and competed with the group which was to become the Twelver Shi`ah. In the Sus region of southwestern Morocco they gained a following among Berber tribes which survived until the sixth century AH (twelfth century CE.(

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The Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mun attempted to bring about a reconciliation between the `Alid and Abbasid branches of the family of the Prophet by appointing `Ali al-Rida as his successor in 817, but this move ended in failure. `Ali al-Rida died two years later, and the caliph was widely accused of having poisoned him. The succession after al-Rida down to the eleventh imam, Hasan al-`Askari, produced only minor schisms, but the death of the latter in 874, apparently without a son, left his followers in disarray. The main body, henceforth known as the Twelver Shi`ah (the Ithna `Ashariyah in Arabic), eventually came to affirm that a son had been born to him before his death but had been hidden. This son had become the twelfth imam and continued to live in concealment. Identified with the Qa'im and the Mahdi, he was expected to reappear in glory to rule the world and make the cause of the Shi`ah triumphant. The time of his absence (ghaybah) falls into two parts. In the age of the lesser ghaybah he was in regular contact with four successive agents (sg., wakil or safir) who represented him among the community of his followers, communicating their questions and requests to him and his answers and instructions to them. In 941, the fourth intermediary died without appointing a successor, and the greater ghaybah began. During this ghaybah no one can claim to be in regular contact with the Hidden Imam. He continues to live unrecognized on earth, however, and may occasionally identify himself to one of his followers or otherwise intervene in the fortunes of his community. [See also Ghaybah; Imamate; and `Ismah[.

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Intellectual currents. The absence of the imam strengthened the position of the scholars (`ulama') in the Shi`i community as transmitters and guardians of the teaching of the imams. They now undertook to gather, examine, and systematize this teaching. For the most part, the first transmitters of the statements of the imams had been Kufans, while the compilation and sifting of the traditions into more comprehensive collections was the work of the school of Qom in northwestern Iran. Some Kufan Shi`i families had settled early in this town, and it became a bastion of Imami Shiism, adhering to the imamate of `Ali al-Rida and his descendants in the ninth century even though the Imamiyah had been eclipsed in Kufa by the predominance of the Zaydiyah, Waqifah, and Fathiyah. The traditionist school of Qom reached its peak in the works of Abu Ja`far al-Kulayni of Rayy (d. 941) and Ibn Babawayhi al-Saduq of Qom (d. 991/2.(

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A rival school in Baghdad progressively adopted the rationalist theology of the Mu`tazilah, who espoused human free will and an anti-anthropomorphist, abstract concept of God in sharp conflict with the predominant theology of Sunni Islam. The Baghdad school rejected Mu`tazili doctrine, however, where it clashed with the basic Imami beliefs about the imamate; thus it repudiated the Mu`tazili thesis of the unconditional, eternal punishment of the unrepentant sinner in the hereafter, affirming the effectiveness of the intercession of the imams for sinners among their faithful followers. In fact, faith in the power of the imams' intercessions was a vital motive for the visits to their shrines which have always been a major aspect of popular Shi`i piety. Twelver Shi`i theologians also maintained, against the Mu`tazili position, that the opponents of the imams occupied the status of infidels and that the imamate was, like prophecy, a rational necessity, not merely a revealed legal requirement. The leading figures of the theological school of Baghdad were Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 1022) and Sharif al-Murtada `Alam al-Huda (d. 1044). Their student, Shaykh Abu Ja`far al-Tusi (d. 1067), became the most important early systematizer of Twelver Shi`i law; his work has remained fundamental for all later developments. See more on Ithna `Ashariyah below[.]

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The Twelver Shi`ah today constitute the great majority of the Shi`ah and are often referred to simply by the latter name. Most of the people of Iran and southern Iraq are Twelvers. There are sizable Twelver Shi`i communities in Bahrein, in al-Hasa and Qatif in eastern Saudi Arabia, in southern Lebanon, in Aleppo in northern Syria, and in parts of Afghanistan. On the Indian subcontinent Twelver Shi`ah are widespread, especially in Punjab, Delhi, and Baroda, as well as in the Deccan, where the first Shi`i missionaries appeared in the fifteenth century, and where the majority of the Qutb-shahis of Golconda and the `Adil-shahis of Bijapur were Shi`i. In recent years, a considerable number of Pakistani families have also joined the Twelvers.

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Extremist Sects. On the fringe of the Imamiyah and the Twelver Shi`ah there arose numerous minor sects of varying nature classed generically as ghulat ("extremists") and frequently excommunicated by the mainstream. Common grounds for the charge of extremism were deification of the imams and antinomianism.

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Imami ghulat. The most prominent figure among the early Imami ghulat in Kufa was Abu al-Khattab al-Asadi, who was excommunicated by imam Ja`far and killed together with seventy of his followers, the Khat-tabiyah, about 755. The Khattabiyah recognized Abu al-Khattab as a prophet sent by Ja`far, whom they viewed as God. Al-Mufaddal ibn `Umar al-Ju`fi, who is sometimes described as the head of an offshoot of the Khat-tabiyah, but who became a trusted agent of Imam Musa al-Kazim, appears to have played a major role in the transmission of gnostic teaching about the preexistence and transmigration of souls and the cyclical history earlier associated with the Kaysani `Abd Allah ibn al-Harith.

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The heresiographers speak of two complementary currents among the ghulat in the second half of the eighth century. The Mukhammisah (Pentadists) believed in a divine pentad consisting of Muhammad, `Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, and Husayn. The five were united in meaning (ma`na) but distinct in name (ism) and had manifested themselves throughout history in the form of prophets and imams. The Mufawwidah (Delegationists) taught that the Eternal One, whose name is unknowable, had delegated the creation of the world to the divine pentad. At the beginning of the ghaybah, the ghulat of this tradition coalesced into two rival sects, the Ishaqiyah and the Nusayriyah. The Ishaqiyah was founded by the Basran Ishaq al-Ahmar (d. 899), who disputed the position of the second safir

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of the twelfth imam. The sect spread from Iraq to Aleppo and the Syrian coast. In Syria it was wiped out by its Nusayri rivals in the thirteenth century and disappeared in Iraq about the same time.

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Nusayriyah and `Alawiyun. The Nusayriyah took their name from Muhammad ibn Nusayr al-Namiri, a companion of the ninth and tenth imams. They became a fully constituted sect under his successors, especially al-Husayn ibn Hamdan al-Khasibi (d. 957 or who carried the sect's teaching to northern Syria and was buried in Aleppo. It was extinguished in Iraq after the Mongol invasion ,(969 but has survived to the present in Syria, especially in Latakia and the Jabal al-Ansariyah region to the east and in the regions of Alexandretta and Cilicia (Adana and Tarsus). In modern times the Nusayriyah are commonly referred to as `Alawis or Alawites. [See Alawiyun[.`

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The name `Alawi (Turk., Alevi) is frequently also applied to other extremist Shi`i communities in Anatolia. Similar groups in Iran are often pejoratively called `Ali-Ilahi ("`Ali deifiers"). Such groups generally have their roots in the late Mongol age (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) and represent a mixture of popular extremist Shiism and Sufism. Strong pro-`Alid sentiments on a popular level were already widespread among Türkmen tribes during the great Turkish expansion into Iran and western Asia in the Seljuk period. These sentiments were reinforced during the Mongol period by the Sufism spread by some of the great religious orders which were themselves moving toward Shi`i beliefs. In the fifteenth century the Kizilbash Türkmen federation and religious order adopted such extremist Shi`i doctrine under the leadership of the Safavids, who now claimed `Alid descent. After the foundation of the Safavid state, however, the rulers furthered orthodox Twelver Shiism as the official religion and gradually divested themselves of the religious veneration and backing of the Kizilbash. Under the Ottomans, the Bektashi dervish order, which became closely associated with the Janissaries, embraced a similar mixture of Sufi and extremist Shi`i beliefs.

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A major sect among the so-called `Ali-Ilahis are the Ahl-i Haqq ("people of the truth"), whose origins apparently go back to the fifteenth century and whose main centers are in the Kurdish regions of western Iran and eastern Iraq and in Azerbaijan. They represent a syncretism of popular Sufi rites, legends, and folklore superimposed on an extremist Shi`i foundation. While `Ali is recognized as one of the seven avatars of the divinity, he is completely overshadowed by the figure of Sultan Sehak (Ishaq.(

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Shaykhiyah. In modern times Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsa'i (d. 1826), the author of a Twelver Shi`i theosophical doctrine, has been charged with extremist views and excommunicated by the mujtahids in Iran. He was specifically accused of denying the physical resurrection and the physical nature of the ascension of the prophet Muhammad. He thus became the founder of the Shaykhi sect which, besides espousing his theosophical teaching, also opposes the authority of the mujtahids, in accordance with the Akhbari position. The sect is scattered throughout Iran and Iraq, with its center in Kirman. Out of it also developed the Babi and, indirectly, the Baha'i religions, but these fall outside the pale of Shiism. [See Shaykhiyah[.

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The Isma`iliyah. An offshoot of the Imamiyah, the Isma`iliyah first became historically important after the middle of the ninth century as a secret revolutionary movement promising the impending advent of Muhammad ibn Isma`il, grandson of Ja`far al-Sadiq, as the Mahdi. The movement soon split into two. One of its branches recognized the hidden leaders of the movement as imams descended from Muhammad ibn Isma`il. With backing of this branch, the leaders rose to rule as the Fatimid caliphate (909-1171). The other branch, commonly known as the Qaramitah, broke with the leadership and refused to recognize the imamate of the Fatimid caliphs. Their most conspicuous success was the establishment of a Qarmati state in eastern Arabia which lasted from 899 until 1076. See Qaramitah[.]

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The Fatimid branch was rent by a schism during the caliphate of al-Hakim (996-1021), whose divinity was proclaimed by a group of enthusiastic followers. The sect arising from this deviation is known as the Druze. [See Druze.] After the death of the caliph al-Mustansir in 1094 the Persian Isma`ili communities recognized his eldest son, Nizar, who did not succeed to the caliphate, as their imam. Known as the Nizariyah, they established their headquarters, and later the seat of their imams, in the mountain stronghold of Alamut in the Elburz mountains. In Syria, where they also occupied some mountain fortresses, they became known to the Crusaders as hashishiyin ("hashish addicts"), a name which was then deformed to "Assassins." The main line of Nizari imams has continued down to the Aga Khans in modern times. [See Assassins and Aga Khan.] A second line, which split off soon after the Mongol conquest of Alamut in 1256, came to an end in 1796. The branch continuing to recognize the Fatimid caliphs was further split after the death of al-Amir in 1130. The majority of the Isma`iliyah in Yemen and India now recognized as their imam al-Tayyib, the caliph's infant son, about whose fate nothing is known. In his absence the spiritual leadership of these sectarians, known as Tayyibiyah, became vested in their da`i mutlaq. As the line of these spiritual leaders became divided in 1591, the Tayyibiyah split into two communities, the Da'udiyah and the Sulaymaniyah. That part of the Isma`ili community adhering to the Fatimid caliphate until its fall disintegrated thereafter. [For more on the Isma`iliyah and its subdivisions, see Isma`iliyah, below[.

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The Zaydiyah. Retaining the politically militant and religiously moderate attitude predominant among the early Kufan Shi`ah, the Zaydiyah developed a doctrine of the imamate distinctly at variance with Imami beliefs. They neither accepted a hereditary line of imams nor considered the imam as divinely protected from sin and error. Rather they held that any descendant of Hasan or Husayn qualified by religious learning could claim the imamate by armed rising against the illegitimate rulers and would then be entitled to the allegiance and backing of the faithful. Thus there were often long periods without legitimate Zaydi imams. The list of recognized Zaydi imams itself has never been entirely fixed although there is general agreement on many of them. In the absence of any claimant possessing the high qualifications of religious learning, the Zaydiyah often supported `Alid rulers as mere da`is ("summoners," i. e., imams with restricted competence). Although they, like the Imamiyah, generally affirmed that `Ali, Hasan, and Husayn had been invested as imams by Muhammad's designation (nass), they maintained that the designation had been obscure so that its meaning could be discovered only by investigation. Thus they minimized the offense of the companions of the Prophet and the Muslim community in ignoring that designation and in backing the early caliphs. In theology, the Zaydiyah from the tenth century on mostly

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accepted Mu`tazili doctrine.

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For over a century after the revolt of Zayd, the Zaydi movement remained based in Kufa near the center of Abbasid power, where various `Alid rebellions backed by it were quickly suppressed. In the second half of the ninth century, however, two Zaydi reigns were founded in remote regions protected by mountain ranges. In Tabaristan (modern Mazandaran) on the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, the Hasanid Hasan ibn Zayd rose to power in 864. This first Zaydi state lapsed in 900 but was restored in 914 by the Husaynid imam al-Nasir al-Utrush, who had converted to Islam many of the natives of Daylam and Gilan living west of Tabaristan. He was also the founder of a legal school doctrine to which his converts adhered, although the older Zaydi community in the region followed the legal doctrine of the Hasanid imam al-Qasim ibn Ibrahim (d. 860). The two communities, known as the Nasiriyah and the Qasimiyah, were often at odds, and, although eventually recognizing each other's doctrine as equally valid, for long periods supported different `Alid imams or da`is. They survived until the sixteenth century, when the Caspian Zaydiyah converted to Twelver Shiism under pressure from the Safavid shah Tahmasp.

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In Yemen the imam Yahya al-Hadi ila al-Haqq, a grandson of al-Qasim ibn Ibrahim, established Zaydi rule in 897. He introduced the legal and theological doctrine of his grandfather, which he elaborated and modified in his own writings. The unity of the Zaydi community in Yemen was rent in the eleventh century by the rise of two heterodox sects, the Mutarrifiyah and the Husayniyah. The former was opposed to some aspects of the Mu`tazili doctrine espoused by the Caspian Zaydi imams and elaborated a distinctive theory of nature which it attributed to al-Hadi and his sons. The Husayniyah denied the death of the imam al-Husayn al-Mahdi in 1013 and expected his return as the Mahdi. Both sects disappeared by the fourteenth century. Relations with the Caspian community were intermittently close for some centuries, and much of its religious literature was transferred to Yemen in the twelfth century. Only exceptionally, however, was an imam ruling in either region able to extend his control to the other. The Zaydi community in Yemen, living mostly in the northern highlands, has survived to the present, although the last imam, Muhammad al-Badr, was overthrown by the revolution of 1962.

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Isma`iliyah

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A major branch of the Shi`ah, the Isma`iliyah traces the line of imams through Isma`il, son of Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq (d. AH CE). Isma`il was initially designated by Ja`far as his successor but predeceased him. Some of Ja`far's followers who 148/765 considered the designation irreversible either denied the death of Isma`il or accepted Isma`il's son Muhammad as the rightful imam after Ja`far.

The Pre-Fatimid Age

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The communal and doctrinal history of the Is-ma`iliyah in this period poses major problems which are still unresolved for lack of reliable sources. The Muslim heresiographers mostly speak of two Isma`ili groups after the death of Imam Ja`far: the "pure Isma`iliyah" held that Isma`il had not died and would return as the Qa'im (Mahdi), while the Mubarakiyah recognized Muhammad ibn Isma`il as their imam. According to the heresiographers, al-Mubarak was the name of their chief, a freedman of Isma`il. It seems, however, that the name (meaning "the blessed"), was applied to Isma`il by his followers, and thus the name Mubarakiyah must at

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first have referred to them. After the death of Ja`far most of them evidently accepted Muhammad ibn Isma`il as their imam in the absence of Isma`il. Twelver Shi`i reports attribute a major role among the early backers of Isma`il to the Khattabiyah, the followers of the extremist Shi`i heresiarch Abu al-Khattab (d. 755?). Whatever the reliability of such reports, later Isma`ili teaching generally shows few traces of Khattabi doctrine and repudiates Abu al-Khattab. An eccentric work reflecting a Khattabi tradition, the Umm al-kitab (Mother of the Book) transmitted by the Isma`iliyah of Badakhshan, is clearly a late adaptation of non-Isma`ili material.

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Nothing is known about the fate of these Isma`ili splinter sects arising in Kufa in Iraq on the death of Imam Ja`far, and it can be surmised that they were numerically insignificant. But about a hundred years later, after the middle of the third century AH (ninth century CE), the Isma`iliyah reappeared in history, now as a well-organized, secret revolutionary movement with an elaborate doctrinal system spread by missionaries called da`is ("summoners") throughout much of the Islamic world. The movement was centrally directed, at first apparently from Ahwaz in southwestern Iran. Recognizing Muhammad ibn Isma`il as its imam, it held that he had disappeared and would return in the near future as the Qa'im to fill the world with justice.

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Early Doctrines. The religious doctrine of this period, which is largely reconstructed from later Isma`ili sources and anti-Isma`ili accounts, distinguished between the outer, exoteric (zahir) and the inner, esoteric (batin) aspects of religion. Because of this belief in a batin aspect, fundamental also to most later Isma`ili thought, the Isma`iliyah were often called Batiniyah, a name which sometimes has a wider application, however. The zahir aspect consists of the apparent, directly accessible meaning of the scriptures brought by the prophets and the religious laws contained in them; it differs in each scripture. The batin consists of the esoteric, unchangeable truths (haqa'iq) hidden in all scriptures and laws behind the apparent sense and revealed by the method of esoteric interpretation called ta'wil, which often relied on qabbalistic manipulation of the mystical significance of letters and their numerical equivalents. The esoteric truths embody a gnostic cosmology and a cyclical, yet teleological history of revelation.

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The supreme God is the Absolute One, who is beyond cognizance. Through his intention (iradah) and will (mashi'ah) he created a light which he addressed with the Qur'anic creative imperative, kun ("Be!"), consisting of the letters kaf and nun. Through duplication, the first, preceding (sabiq) principle, Kuni ("be," fem.) proceeded from them and in turn was ordered by God to create the second, following (tali) principle, Qadar ("measure, decree"). Kuni represented the female principle and Qadar, the male; together they were comprised of seven letters (the short vowels of Qadar are not considered letters in Arabic), which were called the seven higher letters (huruf `ulwiyah) and were interpreted as the archetypes of the seven messenger prophets and their scriptures. In the spiritual world, Kuni created seven cherubs (karubiyah) and Qadar, on Kuni's order, twelve spiritual ranks (hudud ruhaniyah). Another six ranks emanated from Kuni when she initially failed to recognize the existence of the creator above her. The fact that these six originated without her will through the power of the creator then moved her to recognize him with the testimony that "There is no god but God," and to deny her own divinity. Three of these ranks were above her and three below; among the latter was Iblis, who refused Kuni's order to submit to Qadar, the heavenly Adam, and thus became the chief devil. Kuni and Qadar also formed a pentad together with three spiritual forces, Jadd, Fath, and Khayal, which were often identified with the archangels Jibra'il, Mikha'il, and Israfil and mediated between the spiritual world and the religious hierarchy in the physical world.

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The lower, physical world was created through the mediation of Kuni and Qadar, with the ranks of the religious teaching hierarchy corresponding closely to the ranks of the higher, spiritual world. The history of revelation proceeded through seven prophetic eras or cycles, each inaugurated by a speaker (natiq) prophet bringing a fresh divine message. The first six speaker-prophets, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, were each succeeded by a legatee (wasi) or silent one (samit) who revealed the esoteric meaning hidden in their messages. Each legatee was succeeded by seven imams, the last of whom would rise in rank to become the speaker of the next cycle and bring a new scripture and law abrogating the previous one. In the era of Muhammad, `Ali was the legatee and Muhammad ibn Isma`il the seventh imam. Upon his return Muhammad ibn Isma`il would become the seventh speaker prophet and abrogate the law of Islam. His divine message would not entail a new law, however, but consist in the full revelation of the previously hidden esoteric truths. As the eschatological Qa'im and Mahdi, he would rule the world and consummate it. During his absence, the teaching hierarchy was headed by twelve hujjahs residing in the twelve provinces jaza'ir). Below them were several ranks of da`is. The number and names of these ranks given in early Isma`ili texts vary widely and) reflect speculative concerns rather than the actual organization of the hierarchy, about which little is known for either the pre-Fatimid or Fatimid age. Before the advent of the Qa'im, the teaching of the esoteric truths must be kept secret. The neophyte had to swear an oath of initiation vowing strict secrecy and to pay a fee. Initiation was clearly gradual, but there is no evidence of a number of strictly defined grades; the accounts of anti-Isma`ili sources which name and describe seven or nine such grades leading to the final stage of pure atheism and libertinism deserve no credit.

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Emergence of the Movement. The sudden appearance of a widespread, centrally organized Isma`ili movement with an elaborate doctrine after the middle of the ninth century suggests that its founder was active at that time. The Sunni anti-Isma`ili polemicists of the following century name as this founder one `Abd Allah ibn Maymun al-Qaddah. They describe his father, Maymun al-Qaddah, as a Bardesanian who became a follower of Abu al-Khattab and founded an extremist sect called the Maymuniyah. According to this account, `Abd Allah conspired to subvert Islam from the inside by pretending to be a Shi`i working on behalf of Muhammad ibn Isma`il. He founded the movement in the latter's name with its seven grades of initiation leading to atheism and sent his da`is abroad. At first he was active near Ahwaz and later moved to Basra and to Salamiyah in Syria; the later leaders of the movement and the Fatimid caliphs were his descendants. This story is obviously anachronistic in placing `Abd Allah's activity over a century later than that of his father. Moreover, Twelver Shi`i sources mention Maymun al-Qaddah and his son `Abd Allah as faithful companions of Imams Muhammad al-Baqir (d. 735?) and Ja`far al-Sadiq respectively. They do not suggest that either of them was inclined to extremism. It is thus unlikely that `Abd Allah ibn Maymun played any role in the original Isma`ili sect and impossible that he is the founder of the ninth-century movement. The Sunni polemicists' story about `Abd Allah ibn Maymun is, however, based on Isma`ili sources. At least some early Isma`ili communities believed that the leaders of the movement including the first Fatimid caliph, al-Mahdi, were not `Alids but descendants of Maymun al-Qaddah. The Fatimids tried to counter such beliefs by maintaining that their Alid ancestors had used names such as al-Mubarak, Maymun, and Sa`id in order to hide their identity. While such a use of cover`

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names is not implausible, it does not explain how Maymun, allegedly the cover name of Muhammad ibn Isma`il, could have become identified with Maymun al-Qaddah. It has, on the other hand, been suggested that some descendants of `Abd Allah ibn Maymun may have played a leading part in the ninth-century movement. The matter evidently cannot be resolved at present. It is certain, however, that the leaders of the movement, the ancestors of the Fatimids, claimed neither descent from Muhammad ibn Isma`il nor the status of imams, even among their closest da`is, but described themselves as hujjahs of the absent imam Muhammad ibn Isma`il.

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The esoteric doctrine of the movement was of a distinctly gnostic nature. Many structural elements, themes, and concepts have parallels in various earlier gnostic systems, although no specific sources or models can be discerned. Rather, the basic system gives the impression of an entirely fresh, essentially Islamic and Shi`i adaptation of various widespread gnostic motives. Clearly without foundation are the assertions of the anti-Isma`ili polemicists and heresiographers that the Isma`iliyah was derived from various dualist religions, such as Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Bardesanism, Mazdakism, and the Khurramdiniyah.

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The movement was rent by a schism about 899 after `Abd Allah (`Ubayd Allah), the future Fatimid caliph al-Mahdi, succeeded to the leadership. Repudiating the belief in the imamate of Muhammad ibn Isma`il and his return as the Mahdi, al-Mahdi claimed the imamate for himself. He explained to the da`is that his predecessors in the leadership had been legitimate imams but had concealed their rank and identity out of caution. They were descendants of Imam Ja`far's son `Abd Allah, who had been the rightful successor to the imamate rather than Isma`il; the names of Isma`il and his son Muhammad had merely been used to cover up their identity as the imams.

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This apparently radical change of doctrine was not accepted by some of the leading da`is. In the region of Kufa, Hamdan Qarmat and `Abdan broke with al-Mahdi and discontinued their missionary activity. Qarmat's followers were called the Qaramitah, and the name was often extended to other communities which broke with the Fatimid leadership, and sometimes to the Isma`iliyah in general; it will be used here for those Isma`iliyah who did not recognize the Fatimid imamate. `Abdan was the first author of the movement's books. He was murdered by a da`i initially loyal to al-Mahdi, and Hamdan Qarmat disappeared. On the west coast of the Persian Gulf, the da`i Abu Sa`id al-Jannabi followed the lead of Qarmat and `Abdan, who had invested him with his mission. He had already seized a number of towns, including al-Qatif and al-Ahsa, and had thus laid the foundation of the Qarmati state of Bahrein. Other communities which repudiated al-Mahdi's claim to the imamate were in the region of Rayy in northwestern Iran, in Khorasan, and in Transoxiana. Most prominent among the da`is who remained loyal to al-Mahdi was Ibn Hawshab, known as Mansur al-Yaman, the senior missionary in the Yemen. He had brought the region of Jabal Maswar under his control, while his younger colleague and rival, `Ali ibn al-Fadl, was active in the Bilad Yafi` further southwest. The da`i Abu `Abd Allah al-Shi`i, whom Mansur al-Yaman had sent to the Kutamah Berber tribe in the mountains of eastern Algeria, and probably also the da`i al-Haytham, whom he had dispatched to Sind, remained loyal to al-Mahdi. Some of the Isma`iliyah in Khorasan also accepted his claim to the imamate. Residing at this time in Salamiyah, al-Mahdi then left for Egypt together with his son, the later caliph al-Qa'im, as his safety was threatened because of the disaffection of the leading Syrian da`i. At first he intended to proclaim himself as the Mahdi in the Yemen. Increasing doubts about the loyalty of `Ali ibn al-Fadl, who later openly defected, seem to have influenced his decision to go to the Maghreb, where Abu `Abd Allah al-Shi`i, having overthrown the Aghlabids and seized Tunisia, proclaimed him caliph and Mahdi in 910.

The Fatimid Age (910-1171(

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With the establishment of the Fatimid countercaliphate, the Isma`ili challenge to Sunni Islam reached its peak and provoked a vehement political and intellectual reaction. The Isma`iliyah came to be condemned by orthodox theologians as the arch-heresy of Islam. The Fatimid Isma`iliyah was weakened by serious splits, first that of the Qaramitah and later those of the Druzes, the Nizariyah, and the Tayyibiyah.

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The Qaramitah. The Isma`ili communities which repudiated the claim of the Fatimid al-Mahdi to the imamate were initially left without united leadership and in doctrinal disarray. Soon after the rise of the Fatimid caliphate they recovered some organizational and doctrinal unity on the basis of a reaffirmation of the belief in the imamate of Muhammad ibn Isma`il and in his expected return as the Qa'im. This belief was also espoused by the Transoxianan da`i Muhammad ibn Ah-mad al-Nasafi in his Kitab al-mahsul (Book of the Yield), which gained wide authority among the Qarmati Isma`iliyah. The book itself is lost, but numerous quotations from it and discussions in later works attest to its importance and make it possible to reconstruct its contents. Al-Nasafi introduced in it a Neoplatonic cosmology which superseded and partly replaced the earlier cosmolgy and became basic to much of Isma`ili esoteric doctrine throughout the Fatimid age.

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In this cosmology Kuni and Qadar were replaced by the Neoplatonic Universal Intellect and Soul. God, who is beyond any attribute and name and even beyond being and non-being, has originated (abda`a) the Intellect through his divine order or volition amr). The Intellect is described as the first originated being (al-mubda` al-awwal) since the amr has become united with it in) existence. The Universal Soul emanated from the Intellect, and from the Soul in turn issued the seven spheres of the heavens with their stars. These spheres revolve with the Soul's movement, producing the mixture of the four single natures—dryness, humidity, cold, and warmth—to form the composites of earth, water, air, and ether. Out of the mingling of the composites arise the plants with a vegetative soul, which in turn give rise to the animals endowed with a sensitive soul. Out of the animal realm arises the human being with a rational soul which seeks to ascend through the spiritual hierarchy and to rejoin its origin in the Intellect.

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Proclamation of the Mahdi. The da`i of Rayy, Abu Hatim al-Razi (d. 934), claimed superior authority among the Qarmati da`is as the lieutenant of the absent imam. He succeeded in converting a number of powerful men in the region, sent his da`is throughout northwestern Iran, and maintained a correspondance with Abu Tahir al-Jannabi, who had succeeded his father, Abu Sa`id, in the leadership of the Qarmati state in Bahrein. The Qarmati da`is were at this time predicting the advent of the Mahdi after the

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conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the year 928, an occurrence which they believed would bring the era of Islam to an end and usher in the seventh and final era. As the date approached, Abu Tahir carried out daring attacks ever farther into southern Iraq and finally threatened the Abbasid capital of Baghdad itself. In 930 he sacked Mecca during the pilgrimage season, slaughtered pilgrims and inhabitants, and carried off the Black Stone of the Ka`bah as a sign for the end of the era of Islam. In 932 he proclaimed a young Persian from Isfahan as the expected Mahdi.

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Events now took a different course than had commonly been predicted by the Isma`iliyah for the coming of the Mahdi. According to the erudite expert of the chronology of nations, al-Biruni (d. 1050?), the date was chosen to coincide with the passing of years after Zoroaster, the end of the year 1242 of the era of Alexander, for which prophecies ascribed to Zoroaster and Jamasp 1,500 had predicted the restoration of the reign of the Magians. The Persian was said to be a Magian and a descendant of the Persian kings. His hometown of Isfahan had long been associated by the astrologers with the rise of a Persian dynasty which would conquer the Arab caliphate. The Persian is reported to have ordered the worship of fire and the cursing of all the prophets and to have licensed the most outrageous abominations. After the Persian put some Qarmati leaders to death, Abu Tahir felt compelled to kill him and to avow that he had been duped by an impostor.

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The significance of this episode must be judged with caution. The Persian, anti-Arab aspect was evidently a spontaneous development among the leaders of the Qarmati community of Bahrein. It does not confirm the assertions of the Sunni polemicists that the Isma`ili movement originated in an anti-Islamic and anti-Arab plot of Persian dualists, but it may have given rise to them. More deeply rooted in the movement were the antinomian sentiments radically expressed in the cursing of the prophets, the founders of the religious laws. Antinomian tendencies were naturally inherent in religious thought which looked for an esoteric spiritual meaning concealed behind the exoteric surface of scripture and law. Though sometimes latent for a long time, they manifested themselves powerfully at various stages in the history of the Isma`iliyah.

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The ignominious course and outcome of the affair led to massive defections of adherents and shocked the leading da`is. Abu Hatim al-Razi's Kitab al-islah (Book of Correction), in which he criticized and "corrected" various points of al-Nasafi's Kitab al-mahsul, appears to have been written in reaction to the events. Abu Hatim in particular objected to the antinomian tendencies apparent in some of the teaching of al-Nasafi. Arguing that all esoteric truth inevitably requires an exoteric revealed law, he affirmed against al-Nasafi that both Adam, the first speaker prophet, and Jesus had brought a religious law. While admitting that the seventh speaker prophet, Muhammad ibn Isma`il, would not bring a law but reveal the spiritual truths, he insisted that the era of Muhammad had not come to an end with the first presence and disappearance of the seventh imam. There was in each prophetic cycle an interval (fatrah) between the presence of the seventh imam and the advent of the speaker prophet who would inaugurate the new era, during which time the seventh imam was represented by his lieutenants (khulafa.('

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Abu Hatim's ideas failed to rally the Qarmati communities around his leadership as the lieutenant of the imam. In his Kitab al-nusrah (Book of Support), the younger da`i Abu Ya`qub al-Sijistani consistently upheld al-Nasafi's views against Abu Hatim's criticism and categorically rejected Abu Hatim's thesis that esoteric truths could be attained only through the religious law. In Khorasan and Transoxiana in particular the authority of al-Nasafi's Kitab al-mahsul seems to have remained paramount after the author's death in The da`is in Iraq continued to recognize the authority of `Abdan, in whose name they composed numerous treatises tinged with .944 popular philosophy. After repudiating their pseudo-Mahdi, the Qaramitah of Bahrein again claimed to be acting on the orders of the hidden Mahdi. Abu Tahir soon reached an agreement with the Abbasid government under which he guaranteed the safety of the pilgrimage to Mecca in return for an annual tribute and a protection fee paid by the pilgrims. The Black Stone of the Ka`bah was returned to Mecca in 951 after payment of a high ransom. [See Qaramitah[.

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Decline of the movement. In preparation for his conquest of Egypt and the East, the fourth Fatimid caliph, al-Mu`izz (953-975) strove to win the dissident eastern Isma`ili communities for the Fatimid cause and to this end made some ideological concessions to them (see below). His efforts were partly successful, and he gained the allegiance of Abu Ya`qub al-Sijistani, who in his later works fully backed the Fatimid imamate. Other da`is, however, resisted his overtures. Most important, he failed to persuade the Qaramitah of Bahrein, who even allied themselves with the Abbasid caliphate and fought the Fatimid conquerors in Syria and Egypt. Although they later concluded a truce with the Fatimids and at times officially recognized the Fatimid caliphate, they never accepted its religious authority. In the later tenth century they lost their military prowess and were reduced to a local, self-contained power while the Qarmati communities elsewhere either were absorbed into the Fatimid Isma`iliyah or disintegrated. The Qarmati state in Bahrein survived until 1077/8. Little is known about the specific religious beliefs of the sectarians there. Muslim law and rites such as prayer and fasting were not practiced, and all mosques were closed. Much property was owned communally, and some of the revenue from tributes and imposts on sea trades was distributed among the members of the community. Such institutions were, however, not directly founded on the religious teaching, which promised a rule of justice and fairness but did not develop a social program.

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The Brethren of Purity. Much discussed and still unresolved is the question of the relationship of the Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa' (Epistles of the Brethren of Purity) and their anonymous authors to the Isma`iliyah. This ency-clopedia of fifty-two treatises on all sciences of the ancients pervaded by an esoteric religious message was, according to two authors of the later tenth century, composed by a group of secretaries and scholars in Basra about the middle of the century. Later Isma`ili tradition, however, claims that it was written by one of the hidden imams and his da`is a century earlier. The treatises speak of the imam as in hiding, though accessible, and foresee his appearance. Some modern scholars have argued that a part or most of the encyclopedia was composed in the pre-Fatimid Isma`ili community and that quotations and references in the text which belong to the tenth century are later additions. Others consider it as essentially non-Isma`ili though influenced by Isma`ili thought; this judgment is usually based on a comparison with Fatimid Isma`ili literature. It is evident that the authors, if they did live in the tenth century, could not have been adherents of the Fatimid imamate. Yet the thought and terminology of the treatises are pervasively Isma`ili and must have originated in an Isma`ili environment. In the middle of the tenth century Basra was dominated by the Qaramitah of Bahrein. It is not unlikely

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that the authors undertook their project with the approval of the Qarmati leaders, but nothing definite is known about their relationship and the attitude of the later Qaramitah to the encyclopedia. [See Ikhwan al-Safa[.'

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The Fatimid Isma`iliyah. The first Fatimid caliph rose with the claim of being not only the imam but also the expected Mahdi. This claim inevitably raised questions concerning the acts and the eschatological role ascribed to the Mahdi in apocalyptic traditions. Al-Mahdi answered such questions by maintaining that the prophecies concerning the Mahdi would be gradually fulfilled by himself and by the imams succeeding him. He gave his son and successor the caliphal title al-Qa'im, another eschatological name which usually had been considered to refer to the Mahdi. In one basic respect he uncompromisingly countered the Isma`ili expectations for the advent of the Mahdi: while the pre-Fatimid teaching affirmed that the Mahdi as the seventh speaker prophet would abrogate the law of Islam and make the esoteric spiritual truths public, al-Mahdi insisted on strict observation of the religious law of Islam and severely punished some da`is who ignored it and published esoteric teaching. Official Fatimid doctrine always emphasized the equal validity and necessity of the zahir and the batin, of religious work (`amal) in accordance with the law and esoteric knowledge (`ilm.(

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Isma`ili law. Under al-Mahdi began the career of Qadi al-Nu`man (d. 974), the founder of Isma`ili law and author of its most authoritative compendium, the Kitab da`a'im al-Islam (Book of the Buttresses of Islam). In the absence of an Isma`ili legal tradition, Qadi al-Nu`man relied primarily on the legal teaching of Imams Muhammad al-Baqir and Ja`far al-Sadiq, transmitted by Twelver Shi`i traditionists, and secondarily on Zaydi traditions. As a former Maliki jurist, he was evidently also influenced by Maliki legal concepts. In substance Isma`ili law naturally agrees closely with Twelver Shi`i law, it prohibits, however, the temporary marriage (mut`ah) allowed in the latter and nullifies bequests to a legal heir except when consent of the other legal heirs is obtained. It gives the imam authority for determining the beginning of the month without regard to the sighting of the new moon as required by all other Muslim legal schools. Since the early Fatimid period the beginning of the months was generally established in practice on the basis of astronomical calculation and thus often fell one or two days earlier than for other Muslims; this discrepancy often caused intercommunal quarrels about the beginning and end of the fasting month of Ramadan.

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Esoteric doctrines. The Isma`ili law codified by Qadi al-Nu`man was adopted by the fourth Fatimid caliph, al-Mu`izz, as the official law of the Fatimid empire to be applied to all its Muslim subjects. Al-Mu`izz also substantially reformed the Fatimid esoteric doctrine with the clear aim of making it more acceptable to the dissident Qarmati communities in order to gain their backing for the Fatimid imamate. Thus he reaffirmed the early belief that Muhammad ibn Isma`il as the seventh imam was the seventh speaker prophet and the Qa'im and ignored al-Mahdi's claim that `Abd Allah rather than Isma`il had been the legitimate imam after Ja`far al-Sadiq. In his view, the acts of the Qa'im in the physical world would, however, be carried out by his lieutenants (khulafa')—a term familiar to the Qaramitah, who also spoke of the lieutenants of the Qa'im who were to head the hierarchy during his absence. For al-Mu`izz, however, these lieutenants were imams and descendants of Muhammad ibn Isma`il, who would not return to the physical world but would head the spiritual hierarchy at the end of the world. The lieutenants of the Qa'im formed a second heptad of imams in the sixth era, which the prophet Muhammad had been granted as a special privilege. Following the earlier Fatimid caliphs and three hidden imams descended from Muhammad ibn Isma`il, al-Mu`izz was the seventh imam of this heptad. He seems to have envisaged an early end of the physical world and is quoted to have affirmed that there would not be another heptad of imams after him.

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Al-Mu`izz also opened the door to the Neoplatonic cosmology of al-Nasafi, which so far had been rejected by the Fatimid Isma`iliyah. Abu Ya`qub al-Sijistani, who was converted to the Fatimid Isma`iliyah, became their main representative of Neoplatonic thought. Many of his books and treatises are extant. The esoteric teaching, severely restricted under al-Mahdi, was now organized in formal lecture sessions (majalis) held twice weekly. The lectures were prepared by the official chief da`i and submitted to the imam for approval. Attendance at the lectures was restricted to the initiates, who were required to pay religious dues. The Isma`ili communities remained a small minority throughout the Fatimid reign.

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The Druze. During the later reign of the sixth Fatimid caliph, al-Hakim (996-1021), the eschatological expectations that al-Mu`izz had incited gave rise to a new schismatic movement. Encouraged by al-Hakim's abnormal conduct, some of the Isma`iliyah came to speculate that he might be the expected Qa'im. While the official teaching hierarchy strove to counter these speculations, an enthusiastic follower, Hasan al-Akhram, publicly proclaimed al-Hakim's divinity in 1017. He told his Isma`ili audience that their resurrection (qiyamah) had occurred and that the era of their concealment had come to an end. In spite of the favor shown him by the caliph, Hasan was murdered a few months later. In 1019 the movement reemerged, now led by Hamzah ibn `Ali, the true founder of its doctrine.

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Its adherents were called duruz (Druze) after al-Dar(a)zi, an early rival of Hamzah who caught the eye of the public. Hamzah claimed to be the imam, the Qa'im of the Age (qa'im al-zaman), and the embodiment of the Universal Intellect. He identified some of his assistants with the Universal Soul and other ranks of the spiritual hierarchy of the Isma`iliyah: al-Hakim and his ancestors back to the second Fatimid caliph, al-Qa'im, were held to be manifestations of the transcendent godhead. Hamzah proclaimed the abrogation not only of the exoteric religious law but also of the esoteric teaching of the Isma`iliyah through the appearance of God on earth in royal dignity. He defined his own message as the pure doctrine of unity (tawhid) which renewed the message of the Adam of Purity Adam al-safa'), who had opened the cycle of humanity. The six prophets of the following eras from Noah to Muhammad ibn Isma`il) had each brought a blameworthy law ordering the worship of nonbeing and the unity of the idol (`ibadat al-`adam wa-tawhid al-sanam). Hamzah thus employed many Isma`ili concepts but transformed them so radically that the Druze religion is usually considered to be outside the Isma`iliyah. After the death of al-Hakim the new sect was persecuted and quickly suppressed in Egypt. It has survived to the present, however, in the mountains of Syria and Lebanon. [See Druze[.

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Leading figures. A prominent part in the initial fight of the official Fatimid teaching hierarchy against the founders of the Hakim cult was played by the da`i Hamid al-Din al-Kirmani. Active in Baghdad and Basra, he came to Cairo about 1015, presumably invited

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to assist in the struggle against the heretics. Recognizing that the heresy was essentially rooted in the fervent hopes for the advent of the Qa'im with its antinomian implications raised by traditional Isma`ili teaching, al-Kirmani reacted sharply against them. In a letter addressed to Hasan al-Akhram he scornfully repudiated the idea that the resurrection had occurred with the appearance of al-Hakim and that the era of the prophet Muhammad had come to an end. The resurrection would not occur before the signs predicted by Muhammad had appeared. The era of Muhammad and the validity of the law of Islam would continue under the reign of al-Hakim's successors. Ignoring the traditional Isma`ili theories about a limited number of heptads of imams, al-Kirmani envisaged the triumphant rule of the hundredth imam in the era of Muhammad.

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In one of his larger works, the Kitab al-riyad (Book of Meadows), he critically reviewed the controversy between Abu Hatim al-Razi and Abu Ya`qub al-Sijistani over al-Nasafi's Kitab al-mahsul. Almost invariably he backed the position of Abu Hatim but went even further in his affirmation of the indispensibility of the law. The belief that the Qa'im would abrogate the law was faulty, for spiritual knowledge could never be based on anything but the prophetic laws and their rules for worship. Rather the Qa'im would restore the laws in their original form and abolish the teaching hierarchy which would no longer be needed since knowledge would become actual and general while ignorance would be reduced to potentiality. Abu Ya`qub, he argued, was mistaken in asserting that after the Qa'im a time of pure spiritual knowledge without work and law would begin like the great era before Adam. Rather, before Adam pure ignorance had reigned among the creatures since they did not know the hierarchy, and likewise, after the Qa'im ignorance would be gradually actualized again and knowledge would become potential because of the abolition of the hierarchy.

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Although al-Kirmani thus maintained, against Abu Ya`qub, the absolute priority of the law over spiritual knowledge, he also made a major contribution to the esoteric teaching. In his most famous work, the Kitab rahat al-`aql (Peace of Mind), he propounded a new cosmology evidently influenced by the Muslim philosophers of al-Farabi's school. He replaced the pair of the Intellect and the Soul ruling the spiritual world by a hierarchy of ten Intellects. The place of the Soul thus was taken by the Second Intellect or First Emanation (al-munba`ith al-awwal), which proceeded from the higher relation of the First Intellect. From the lower relation of the First Intellect proceeded the Third Intellect, or Second Emanation, which is the first potential being, equated with matter and form and thus the basis of the physical world. Seven further Intellects originated jointly from the First and Second Intellects. The tenth one is the Active Intellect (al-`aql al-fa"al), the demiurge governing the lower world. The structure of the astral world and of the religious hierarchy was described by al-Kirmani as closely paralleling that of the spiritual world. Al-Kirmani's cosmology had little impact on Fatimid doctrine, which mostly preferred the older cosmology of al-Nasafi and Abu Ya`qub. It was later adopted by the Tayyibi Isma`iliyah in the Yemen.

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A prominent da`i during the long caliphate of the Fatimid al-Mustansir (1036-94) was Nasir-i Khusraw, well known as a Persian poet and as the author of a travel narrative. Because of his activity as a Fatimid da`i, he was forced to leave Balkh and found refuge in a Badakhshan mountain village in the upper Oxus valley, where he wrote and taught until his death about 1088/9. He became the patron saint of the Isma`ili community of Badakhshan, which has preserved many of his Isma`ili works. Some of these are Persian translations and adaptations of earlier books in Arabic; most important is his Kitab jami` al-hikmatayn (Book Joining the Two Wisdoms), in which he analyzed agreement and disagreement between the views of the Muslim philosophers and the prophetic wisdom of Isma`ili gnosis. [See Nasir-i Khusraw[.

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Another leading figure in the contemporary Fatimid teaching hierarchy was al-Mu'ayyad fi al-Din of Shiraz, the son of an Isma`ili da`i active at the Buyid court. Al-Mu'ayyad succeeded his father and converted the Buyid emir Abu Kalijar and some of his Daylami troops to the Isma`iliyah but was forced to leave because of pressure on Abu Kalijar from the Abbasid court. He fled to Cairo where he was appointed chief da`i in 1058. Although he was soon dismissed and exiled for a time, he regained wide influence as a da`i before his death in 1077. His early career is described in his autobiography. His poetry, gathered in a diwan, is strictly doctrinal. The most massive of his numerous works is an eight-volume collection of eight hundred of his teaching sessions (majalis). His doctrine was later considered highly authoritative, especially among the Tayyibi Isma`iliyah in the Yemen and India.

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Later schisms. During the latter part of the caliphate of al-Mustansir the Isma`ili movement in Iran was spurred to revolutionary activity by the teaching and leadership of Hasani Sabbah, who in 1090 seized the mountain stronghold of Alamut northwest of Qazvin and made it his headquarters. He had earlier visited Cairo when Nizar, al-Mustansir's eldest son, was the designated heir. After the death of al-Mustansir, the powerful vizier al-Afdal put the youngest son, Ahmad, on the throne with the caliphal name al-Musta`li and captured and immured Nizar, who had resisted. Hasani Sabbah, however, continued to recognize Nizar as the legitimate imam and claimed that Nizar had escaped and broken with the Isma`ili leadership in Cairo. He gained general support among the Isma`iliyah in Iran and northern Syria and thus became the founder of the Nizari branch. Al-Musta`li was recognized by most of the Isma`iliyah in Egypt, the Yemen, India, and by many in Syria and Palestine.

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A further split among the Isma`iliyah still backing the imamate of the Fatimid caliphs occurred after the assassination of al-Musta`li's son and successor, al-Amir, by a Nizari in 1130. Eight months earlier al-Amir's newborn son, al-Tayyib, had officially been proclaimed his prospective heir, but a cousin of al-Amir, `Abd al-Majid al-Hafiz, was now put on the throne. First merely appointed regent, he was later proclaimed caliph and imam. Some Isma`ili communities, especially in the Yemen and India, repudiated his claim and continued to recognize al-Tayyib, about whose fate nothing is known, as the rightful successor of al-Amir. They were led by the Sulayhid queen al-Sayyidah residing in Dhu Jiblah in central Yemen. Most of the Isma`iliyah in Egypt, southern Syria, and southern Yemen, where they were led by the Zuray`id rulers of Aden, accepted the imamate of al-Hafiz in spite of the irregularity of the succession of a cousin. They were known as the Hafiziyah or Majidiyah. The Fatimid caliphate was now in full decline and was overthrown in 1171 by the Ayyubid Salah al-Din (Saladin), who restored Sunnism as the official religion in Egypt. Hafizi communities survived chiefly in Upper Egypt and continued to recognize as their imams certain descendants of the last Fatimid caliph, al-`Adid, who were kept prisoners in Cairo. Under official persecution the Hafizi communities gradually disintegrated; the last mention of them occurs in the late thirteenth century.

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The Post-Fatimid Isma`iliyah

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With the disintegration of the Hafizi branch, only the Nizari and Tayyibi communities, which had separated from the official Fatimid Isma`iliyah before the fall of the Fatimid dynasty, remained. Both branches, though further divided by schisms, have survived to the present.

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The Nizariyah. With the seizure of Alamut, Hasani Sabbah initiated a policy of armed revolt against the seljuk sultanate. The Nizariyah captured and fortified numerous mountain castles in the Elburz range, towns in Quhistan in northwestern Iran, and later also mountain strongholds such as Qadmus and Masyaf in northern Syria. In the face of the overwhelming military superiority of their opponents they relied on intimidation through the spectacular assassination of prominent leaders by fida'is, self-sacrificing devotees. Because of their apparently irrational conduct they were commonly called hashishiyin, hashish addicts. Stories that the fida'is were in fact conditioned for their task by the use of hashish are legendary. Their designation as hashishiyin was taken over by the Crusaders in Syria and entered European languages as "assassins." [See Assassins[.

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Hasani Sabbah also elaborated an apologetic missionary doctrine which became known as the "new preaching" (da`wah jadidah) of the Isma`iliyah. At its core was the thesis of humanity's permanent need for ta`lim, divinely inspired and authoritative teaching, which was basic in much of Shi`i thought. Hasani Sabbah developed it in a series of arguments establishing the inadequacy of human reason in gaining knowledge of God and then went on to demonstrate that only the Isma`ili imam was such a divinely guided teacher. The Nizariyah came to be commonly called the Ta`limiyah after this doctrine, and Sunni opponents such as al-Ghazali concentrated their efforts on refuting it. Hasani Sabbah further stressed the autonomous teaching authority of each imam in his time, independent of his predecessors, thus paving the way for the Nizari radicalization of the doctrine of the imamate as compared with Fatimid doctrine.

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Among the Sunnis apparently attracted by the "new preaching" was the heresiographer and Ash`ari theologian al-Shahrastani d. 1143). Although he kept his relations with the Nizariyah secret, they were revealed by his student al-Sam`ani. Among his extant) writings are some crypto-Isma`ili works including an incomplete Qur'an commentary in which he used Isma`ili terminology and hinted at his conversion by a "pious servant of God" who had taught him the esoteric principles of Qur'anic exegesis. Most notable, however, is his refutation of the theological doctrine of the philosopher Ibn Sina (Avicenna) from a concealed Isma`ili point of view, entitled Kitab al-musara`ah (Book of the Wrestling Match). Here he defended the Isma`ili thesis that God, as the giver of being, is beyond being and nonbeing, rejected Avicenna's description of God as the involuntary necessitating cause of the world, and suggested that the Active Intellect which brings the human intellect from potentiality to actuality is the prophetic intellect rather than the intellect of the lunar sphere as held by the followers of Avicenna.

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Qiyamah doctrine. After his death in 1124, Hasani Sabbah was succeeded as lord of Alamut and chief of the Nizari community by his assistant Buzurgummid. On 17 Ramadan 599 (8 August 1164) the latter's grandson, known as Hasan `ala Dhikrihi al-Salam, solemnly proclaimed the resurrection (qiyamah) in the name of the absent imam and declared the law of Islam abrogated. He interpreted the spiritual meaning of the resurrection as a manifestation of the unveiled truth in the imam, which actualized paradise for the faithful capable of grasping it while condemning the opponents to the hell of spiritual nonexistence. Two years later Hasan was murdered by a brother-in-law who objected to the abolition of the Islamic law. His son Muhammad (1166-1210) further elaborated the qiyamah doctrine. While Hasan seems to have indicated that as the hujjah of the imam he was spiritually identical with him, Muhammad maintained that his father had been the imam by physical descent; apparently he claimed that Hasan was the son of a descendant of Nizar who had secretly found refuge in Alamut.

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According to the qiyamah doctrine, the resurrection consisted in recognizing the divine truth in the present imam, who was the manifestation of the order to create (amr) or word (kalimah) and, in his revelatory aspect the Qa'im. The imam thus was raised in rank above the prophets. There had been imam-Qa'ims also in the earlier prophetic cycles: Mechizedek (Malik al-Salam), Dhu al-Qarnayn, Khidr, Ma`add, and, in the era of Muhammad, `Ali. They were recognized by the prophets of their time as the manifestation of the divine. In the qiyamah, the spiritual reality of the imam-Qa'im manifests itself openly and directly to the faithful. The teaching hierarchy intervening between them and the imam thus had faded away as unnecessary in accordance with the earlier predictions about the advent of the Qa'im. There remained only three categories of humanity: the opponents of the imam adhering to the law of Islam, his ordinary followers known as the "people of graduation" (ahl al-tarattub), who had advanced beyond the law to the esoteric batin) and thus had attained partial truth, and "the people of union" (ahl al-wahdah), who see the imam plainly in his spirtual reality) discarding outward appearances and have therefore reached the realm of pure truth.

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Muhammad's son Jalal al-Din Hasan (1210-1221) repudiated the qiyamah doctrine and proclaimed his adherence to Sunni Islam. He publicly cursed his predecessors as infidels, recognized the suzerainty of the Abbasid caliph, ordered his subjects to follow the law in its Sunni form, and invited Sunni scholars for their instruction. Thus he became commonly known as the New Muslim (naw-musulman). His followers mostly obeyed his orders as those of the infallible imam. Under his son `Ala' al-Din Muhammad (1221-1255) the application of the law was again relaxed, though it was not abolished.

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During, `Ala' al-Din's reign the philospher and astronomer Nasir al-Din Tusi (d. 1274), originally a Twelver Shi`i, joined the Isma`iliyah and actively supported the Nizari cause, though he later turned away from them and wrote some theological works backing Twelver Shi`i belief. In a spiritual autobiography written for his Isma`ili patrons he described his upbringing as a strict adherent of the law and his subsequent study of scholastic theology and philosophy. While he found philosophy intellectually most

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satisfying, he discovered that its principles were shaky when the discourse reached its ultimate goal, the knowledge of God and the origins and destiny of humanity, and recognized the need for an infallible teacher to guide reason to its perfection. He then chanced upon a copy of the sacred articles (fusul-i muqaddas) of Imam Hasan `ala Dhikrihi al-Salam and decided to join the Isma`iliyah. While some of Tusi's works written in this period, such as his widely read Nasirean Ethics (akhlaq-i Nasiri), show traces of Nizari thought, he also composed some religious treatises specifically addressed to the Nizariyah. The contemporary Nizari teaching is primarily known through them, particularly his Rawdat al-taslim (Meadow of Submission) or Tasawwurat (Representations.(

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Return to concealment. The restoration of the law by Jalal al-Din Hasan was now interpreted as a return to a period of precautionary dissimulation (taqiyah) and concealment (satr) in which the truth is hidden in the batin. The resurrection proclaimed by Hasan `ala Dhikrihi al-Salam had come at about the middle of the millennium of the era of the prophet Muhammad and had set the pattern for the final resurrection at the end of it. In the era of Muhammad, the times of concealment and of resurrection might alternate according to the decision of each imam, since every imam was potentially a Qa'im. The contradictions in the conduct of the imams were merely in appearance, since in their spiritual reality they were identical and all acted in accordance with the requirements of their time. In the time of concealment the state of union with the imam was confined to his hujjah, who was consubstantial with him. His other followers, the "people of gradation," were divided into the strong (aqwiya') and the weak (du`afa') according to their closeness to the truth.

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Post-Alamut Developments. In 1256 `Ala' al-Din Muhammad's son and successor Khurshah surrendered Alamut to the Mongol conquerors and was killed soon afterward. The Nizari state was thus destroyed, and the Persian Isma`ili communities were decimated by massacres. Thereafter the imams lived mostly in concealment, and there is considerable uncertainty about their names, number, and sequence. Following a disputed succession their line soon divided into two branches, one continuing with Muhammad-shah, the other with Qasim-shah. Of the Muhammad-shahi imams, Shah Tahir Dakani (d. 1549?) achieved fame as a religious scholar and leader. The popularity of his teaching aroused the suspicion of the Safavid shah Isma`il, who exiled him to Kashan. Later he was forced to leave Iran and eventually found refuge in Ahmadnagar in the Deccan, where he became an adviser of the ruler Burhan Nizam Shah, whom he encouraged to proclaim Shiism as the official religion. His writings consisted mainly of commentaries on Twelver Shi`i and philosophical treatises, although he also maintained relations with his Isma`ili followers. The last known imam of the Muhammad-shahi line was Amir Muhammad Baqir, with whom his Syrian Isma`ili followers lost all contact after 1796. After a vain search for a descendant of his, a section of the Syrian community changed allegiance in 1887 to the Qasim-shahi line represented by the Aga Khans. A smaller section known as the Ja`fariyah, is at present the only community still adhering to the Muhammad-shahi line .

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Imams of the Qasim-shahi branch are known to have lived in the later fifteenth and again in the seventeenth century in the village of Anjudan near Mahallat in Iran, where their tombs have been found. They were in this period, and until the ninteenth century, commonly associated with the Ni`matullahi Sufi order. With the appointment of Imam Abu al-Hasan Shah as governor of Kerman in 1756 they rose to political prominence. His grandson Hasan `Ali Shah Mahallati married a daughter of the Qajar king of Persia, Fath `Ali Shah, who gave him the title of Aga Khan, which has since been borne hereditarily by his successors. Hasan `Ali Shah moved to India in 1843 and after 1848 resided in Bombay. Opposition to his authority in the Isma`ili Khoja community led to court litigation ending in 1886 in the judgment of Sir Joseph Arnould in his favor. It recognized the Khojas as part of the wider Nizari Isma`ili community. The present, fourth Aga Khan, Karim Khan, succeeded his grandfather in 1957 [See Aga Khan[.

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Religious literature. The wide dispersal of the Nizari communities, language barriers among them, and their often tenuous relations with the concealed imams led to largely independent organization and literary traditions. In Persia conditions after the fall of Alamut encouraged the imams and their followers to adopt Sufi forms of religious life. Sufi ideas and terminology had already influenced the qiyamah and late Alamut doctrine; now Isma`ili ideas were often camouflaged in apparently Sufi poetry, the imam being revered as the Sufi saint. Doctrinal works, written again from the sixteenth century on, essentially reflect the teaching of the late Alamut age with its emphasis on the role of the hujjah of the imam as the only gate to his spiritual essence and truth. Interest in the traditional Isma`ili cosmology and cyclical prophetic history waned as the religious literature of the Fatimid age was no longer available.

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The community of Badakhshan, which accepted the Nizari imamate probably before the fall of Alamut, remained attached to the writings, both genuine and spurious, of Nasir-i Khusraw, although many Persian Nizari works of the Alamut and post-Alamut age also found their way there. It also transmitted and revered the Umm al-Kitab, the anonymous Persian work sometimes erroneously described as proto-Isma`ili. It reflects some of the gnostic thought of the Kufan Shi`i ghulat of the eighth century, but its final redaction may be as late as the twelfth century.

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The literature of the Nizari community in Syria, written in Arabic, developed independently of the Persian literature even in the Alamut period. There is no evidence that Persian works were translated into Arabic. Although the resurrection was proclaimed in Syria, apparently with some delay, the qiyamah and post-qiyamah doctrine of the Persian Nizariyah with its exaltation of the imam as the manifestation of the divine word made practically no impact there. The Syrian community preserved a substantial portion of Fatimid and Qarmati literature, and scholarly tradition continued to concentrate on the traditional cosmolgy and cyclical prophetic history. In some religious texts of a more popular character, Rashid al-Din Sinan (d. 1193?) the leader of the Syrian Isma`iliyah, known to the crusaders as the "Old Man of the Mountain," is celebrated as a popular hero and assigned a cosmic rank usually reserved for the imam .

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The Indian subcontinent. The origins and early history of the Nizari community on the Indian subcontinent are largely obscure. The Nizariyah there are often collectively referred to as Khojas, although there are other, smaller Nizari groups such as the Shamsiyah

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and Momnas, while some Sunni and Twelver Shi`i Khoja groups have split from the main body of the Nizariyah. According to their legendary history, the Nizari faith was first spread by pir Shams al-Din, whose father is said to have been sent as a da`i from Alamut. The community was ruled thereafter by pirs descended from Shams al-Din. Pir Sadr al-Din, who can be dated with some likelihood in the later fourteenth century, is credited with the conversion of the Khojas from the Hindu caste of the Lohanas and to have laid the foundation of their communal organization, building their first jama`at-khanahs (assembly and prayer halls) and appointing their mukhis (community leaders). The center of his activity was in Ucch in Sind. A substantial section of the community seceded in the sixteenth century under the pir Nar (Nur) Muhammad Shah, who broke with the imams in Iran claiming that his father, Imam Shah, had been the imam and that he had succeeded him. This community, known as Imam-Shahis or Satpanthis, has further split on the issue of leadership and lives chiefly in Gujarat and Khandesh. It has tended to revert to Hinduism but shares much of its traditional religious literature with the Nizari Khojas.

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This literature, which is known as Sat Panth (True Path), consists of ginans or gnans, religious poems composed in, or translated into, several Indian languages and meant to be sung to specific melodies in worship. Most of them are attributed to the early pirs but cannot be dated accurately and may have undergone substantial changes in the transmission. They include hymns, religious and moral exhortation, and legendary history of the pirs and their miracles, but contain no creed or theology. Islamic and Hindu beliefs, especially popular Tantric ones, are freely mixed. While idol worship is rejected, Hindu mythology is accepted. `Ali is considered the tenth avatar (incarnation of the deity), and the imams are identical with him. The Qur'an is described as the last of the Vedas, which are recognized as sacred scriptures whose true interpretation is known to the pirs. Faith in the true religion will free believers from further rebirths and open paradise, which is described in islamic terms, to them, while those failing to recognize the imams must go through another cycle of rebirths. [See Ginan.] The Arabic and Persian Isma`ili literature has been virtually unknown among the Khojas except for the Persian Pandiyat-i jawanmardi, a collection of religious and moral exhortations of the late fifteenth-century Nizari imam al-Mustansir which was adopted as a sacred book. Khojas live chiefly in lower Sind, Cutch, Gujarat, Bombay, and in wide diaspora, particularly in East and South Africa, Arabia, Ceylon, and Burma.

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Further Nizari communities are found in the mountains of Chitral, Gilgit, and Hunza in Pakistan, in parts of Afghanistan, and in the region of Yarkand and Kashgar in Chinese Turkistan. Organization, religious practices, and observance of shari`ah rules vary among the scattered communities. The recent Aga Khans have stressed the rootedness of the Nizari Isma`iliyah in Shi`i Islam and its continued bonds with the world of Islam.

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The Tayyibiyah. After breaking with the Fatimid teaching hierarchy, the Tayyibiyah in the Yemen recognized the Sulayhid queen as the hujjah of the concealed imam al-Tayyib; with her backing they set up an independent teaching hierarchy headed by a da`i mutlaq ("unrestricted summoner") whose spiritual authority since her death in 1138 has been supreme. The second da`i mutlaq, Ibrahim al-Hamidi (1151-1162), became the real founder of the Tayyibi esoteric doctrine, which he elaborated especially in his Kitab kanz al-walad (Book of the Child's Treasure). The position remained in his family until 1209, when it passed to `Ali ibn Muhammad of the Banu al-Walid al-Anf family, which held it for over three centuries with only two interruptions. The political power of the Yemenite da`is reached a peak during the long incumbency of Idris `Imad al-Din ibn al-Hasan, the nineteenth da`i mutlaq (1428-1468). He is also the author of a seven-volume history of the Isma`ili imams, Kitab `uyun al-akhbar (Book of Choice Stories) and of a two-volume history of the Yemenite da`is, Kitab nuzhat al-akhbar (Book of Story and Entertainment), as well as works of esoteric doctrine and religious controversy. While the Yemenite da`is had been able to act relatively freely with the backing or protection of various rulers during the early centuries, they usually faced hostility from the Zaydi imams and in the sixteenth century suffered relentless persecution. In 1539 the twenty-third da`i mutlaq appointed an Indian, Yusuf ibn Sulayman, as his successor, evidently in recognition of the growing importance of the Indian Tayyibi community. Yusuf came to reside in the Yemen, but after his death in 1566 his successor, also Indian, transferred the headquarters to Gujarat in India.

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Doctrines. The Tayyibiyah preserved a large portion of the Fatimid religious literature and generally maintained the traditions of Fatimid doctrine more closely than the Nizariyah. Thus the Tayyibi da`is always insisted on the equal importance of the zahir and batin aspects of religion, strict compliance with the religious law and esoteric teaching. Qadi al-Nu`man's Da`a'im al-Islam has remained the authoritative codex of Tayyibi law and ritual to the present. In the esoteric doctrine, however, there were some innovations which gave the Tayyibi gnosis its distinctive character. The Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa' were accepted as the work of one of the pre-Fatimid hidden imams and were frequently quoted and interpreted.

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The cosmological system of al-Kirmani with its ten higher Intellects replaced that of al-Nasafi predominant in the Fatimid age. Ibrahim al-Hamidi changed its abstract rational nature by introducing a myth which Henry Corbin has called the Isma`ili "drama in heaven." According to it, the Second and Third Intellects emanating from the First Intellect became rivals for the second rank. When the Second Intellect attained his rightful position by his superior effort, the Third Intellect failed to recognize his precedence; in punishment for his haughty insubordination he fell from the third rank behind the remaining seven Intellects and, after repenting, became stabilized as the Tenth Intellect and demiurge (mudabbir). The lower world was produced out of the spiritual forms (suwar) which had also refused to recognize the superior rank of the Second Intellect, and out of the darkness generated by this sin. The Tenth Intellect, who is also called the spiritual Adam, strives to regain his original rank by summoning the fallen spiritual forms to repentance.

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The first representative of his summons (da`wah) on earth was the first and universal Adam, the owner of the body of the world of origination (sahib al-juththah al-ibda`iyah), or higher spiritual world. He is distinguished from the partial Adam who opened the present age of concealment (satr), in which the truth is hidden under the exterior of the prophetic messages and laws. After his passing the first Adam rose to the horizon of the Tenth Intellect and took his place, while the Tenth Intellect rose in rank. Likewise after the passing of the Qa'im of each prophetic cycle, that being rises and takes the place of the Tenth Intellect, who thus gradually reaches the Second Intellect.

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Countless cycles of manifestation (kashf) and concealment alternate in succession until the great resurrection (qiyamat al-qiyamat) which consummates the megacycle (al-kawr al-a`zam) lasting 360,000 times 360,000 years. The soul of every believer is joined on his initiation to the esoteric truth by a point of light; this is his spiritual soul, which grows as he advances in knowledge. After his physical death the light rises to join the soul of the holder of the rank (hadd) above him in the hierarchy. Jointly they continue to rise until the souls of all the faithful are gathered in the light temple (haykal nurani) in the shape of a human being which constitutes the form of the Qa'im (surah qa'imiyah) of the cycle, which then rises to the horizon of the Tenth Intellect. The souls of the unbelievers remain joined to their bodies, which are dissolved into inorganic matter and further transformed into descending orders of harmful creatures and substances. Depending on the gravity of their sins they may eventually rise again through ascending forms of life and as human beings may accept the summons to repentance or end up in torment lasting the duration of the megacycle .

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Indian communities. The Tayyibiyah in India are commonly known as the Bohoras. There are, however, also Sunni and some Hindu Bohoras; they are mostly engaged in agriculture, while the Isma`ili Bohoras are generally merchants. The origins of the Tayyibi community in Gujarat go back to the time before the Tayyibi schism. According to the traditional account an Arab da`i sent from the Yemen arrived in the region of Cambay with two Indian assistants in 1068. The Isma`ili community founded by him, though led by local walis, always maintained close commercial as well as religious ties with the Yemen and was controlled by the Yemenite teaching hierarchy. It naturally followed the Yemenite community at the time of the schism. From Cambay the community spread to other cities, in particular Patan, Sidhpur, and Ahmadabad. In the first half of the fifteenth century the Isma`iliyah were repeatedly exposed to persecution by the Sunni sultans of Gujarat, and after a contested succession to the leadership of the Bohora community, a large section, known as the Ja`fariyah, seceded and converted to Sunnism.

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After its transfer from the Yemen in 1566, the residence of the da`i mutlaq remained in India. The succession to the twenty-sixth da`i mutlaq, Da'ud ibn `Ajabshah (d. 1591), was disputed. In India Da'ud Burhan al-Din ibn Qutbshah was recognized by the great majority as the twenty-seventh da`i mutlaq. However, Da'ud ibn `Ajabshah's deputy in the Yemen, Sulayman ibn Hasan, a grandson of the first Indian da`i mutlaq Yusuf ibn Sulayman, also claimed to have been the designated successor and after a few years he came to India to press his case. Although he found little support, the dispute was not resolved and resulted in the permanent split of the Da'udi and Sulaymani factions recognizing separate lines of da`is.

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The leadership of the Sulaymaniyah, whose Indian community was small, reverted back to the Yemen with the succession of the thirtieth da`i mutlaq, Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn Fahd al-Makrami, in 1677. Since then the position of da`i mutlaq has remained in various branches of the Makrami family except for the time of the forty-sixth da`i, an Indian. The Makrami da`is usually resided in Badr in Najran. With the backing of the tribe of the Banu Yam they ruled Najran independently and at times extended their sway over other parts of the Yemen and Arabia until the incorporation of Najran into Saudi Arabia in 1934. The peak of their power was in the time of the thirty-third da`i mutlaq, Isma`il ibn Hibat Allah (1747-1770), who defeated the Wahhabiyah in Najd and invaded Hadramawt. He is also known as the author of an esoteric Qur'an commentary, virtually the only religious work of a Sulaymani author published so far. Since Najran came under Saudi rule, the religious activity of the da`is and their followers has been severely restricted. In the Yemen the Sulaymaniyah are found chiefly in the region of Manakha and the Haraz mountains. In India they live mainly in Baroda, Ahmadabad, and Hyderabad and are guided by a representative (mansub) of the da`i mutlaq residing in Baroda.

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The da`is of the Da'udiyah, who constitute the great majority of the Tayyibiyah in India, have continued to reside there. All of them have been Indians except the thirtieth da`i mutlaq, `Ali Shams al-Din (1621-1631), a descendant of the Yemenite da`i Idris Imad al-Din. The community was generally allowed to develop freely although there was another wave of persecution under the` emperor Awrangzib (1635-1707), who put the thirty-second da`i mutlaq, Qutb al-Din ibn Da'ud, to death in 1646 and imprisoned his successor. The residence of the Da'udi da`i mutlaq is now in Bombay, where the largest concentration of Bohoras is found. Outside Gujarat, Da'udi Bohoras live in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, in many of the big cities of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Burma, and the East Africa. In the Yemen the Da'udi community is concentrated in the Haraz mountains.

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After the death of the twenty-eighth da`i mutlaq, Adam Safi al-Din, in 1621, a small faction recognized his grandson `Ali ibn Ibrahim as his successor and seceded from the majority recognizing `Abd al-Tayyib Zaki al-Din. The minority became known as `Alia Bohoras and have followed a separate line of da`is residing in Baroda. Holding that the era of the prophet Muhammad had come to an end, a group of `Alias seceded in 1204/1789. Because of their abstention from eating meat they are called Nagoshias (not meat eaters). In 1761 a distinguished Da'udi scholar, Hibat Allah ibn Isma`il, claimed that he was in contact with the hidden imam, who had appointed him his hujjah and thus made his rank superior to that of da`i mutlaq. He and his followers, known as Hibtias, were excommunicated and persecuted by the Da'udiyah. Only a few Hibtia families are left in Ujjain. Since the turn of the century a Bohora reform movement has been active. While recognizing the spiritual authority of the da`i mutlaq it has sought through court action to restrict his powers of excommunication and his absolute control over community endowments and alms. All of these groups are numerically insignificant.

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